

Law Office of Lawrence Berliner, LLC

1720 POST ROAD EAST, SUITE 214-E, WESTPORT CT 06880

Telephone: 203-255-0582, Fax: 203-255-0576, E-mail: lwb.esq@gmail.com, website: berlinerspeciallaw.com

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Via E-Mail: HEDTestimony@cga.ct.gov

Representative Robert Sanchez, Co-Chair

Senator Douglas McCroy-Co-Chair

Representative Jill Barry, Vice Chair

Senator Dennis Mary Abrams Daugherty, Vice Chair

Representative Kathleen McCarty, Ranking Member

Senator Eric Berthel, Ranking Member

Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement

Legislative Office Building

Hartford, CT 06106

Re: R.C.B. No. 6517- AAC Implementing The Recommendations Of The Task Force To Analyze the Implementation Of Laws Governing Dyslexia Instruction.

Dear Representative Robert Sanchez, Senator Douglas McCroy, Representative Jill Barry, Senator Dennis Mary Abrams Daugherty, Representative Kathleen McCarty, Senator Eric Berthel, and Members of the HED Committee,

I am writing to urge your support and the support of the Members of the Committee to favorably report out of the Committee, the provisions of R.C.B. 6517. This legislation, if enacted, would improve the quality of the education of children with Dyslexia by requiring the Department of Education, to ensure that educator preparation programs comply with the Dyslexia Task Force's recommendations that educators receive specific instruction in the detection and recognition of Dyslexia, that educators are properly trained in evidence based structured literacy interventions for students with Dyslexia; that educators and educator candidates have sufficient training and practicum hours in programs of instruction with evidence based structured literacy interventions for students with Dyslexia; that educators and educator candidates have sufficient training in the diagnosis and remediation of reading and language arts; that educator preparation programs comply with these requirement; that the Department of Education verifies that any out of state educator who is seeking certification from the Department of Education complies with the training and education requirement set forth in this legislation; that the Department of Education will enhance its training modules for Dyslexia; the legislation will mandate collaboration and coordination between the Department of Education and the Department of Higher Education with respect providing trained faculty for educator preparation programs that would be designed to implement the recommendations from the Dyslexia Task Force; requiring the Department of Education to ensure that local school districts receiving proper guidance for administering approved reading assessments in such areas including but not limited to phonics, reading, phonemic awareness, blending, fluency, rapid naming, phonological

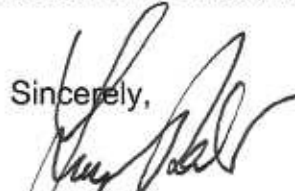
skills, short-term memory and listening comprehension, as more fully set forth in the Dyslexia Task Force's recommendations; that reading assessment are conducted in both English and the child's native language; and the legislation would require the establishment of a Dyslexia In-Service Training Program Advisory Council that would ensure that the recommendations of the Dyslexia Task Force are completely implemented with fidelity.

As an attorney who has been practicing in the field of special education law and disability law for well over thirty years, often I represent families who have children who have undiagnosed reading disabilities that affects their academic, social and emotional well-being in a school setting, because they cannot read. In addition to falling further behind academically, my clients suffer from low self-esteem, they lack confidence and motivation, and in many situations, they simply give up on school or they are passed along without learning the basics. Implementing this legislation and the Dyslexia Task Force's recommendations with fidelity will go a long way to ensure that children with actual or suspected reading disabilities are properly identified as early as possible by qualified and trained staff, that that school staff are properly trained and credentialed to identify children with Dyslexia, and that school staff are qualified and properly trained to deliver a program of evidence-based structured literacy with fidelity to the reading program and consistent with the student's unique needs. This legislation would provide parents, their advocates, and educators with the necessary tools to ensure that children with Dyslexia are properly evaluated, educated, and ensure that the gaps with the acquisition of basic foundational reading skills are closed. All too often in my experience, there are well-intentioned educators assigned to children with Dyslexia who lack the proper training to deliver a program of evidence-based structured literacy with fidelity. This legislation would also provide such educators and local school districts with the proper training, guidance, and resources necessary to ensure that children with Dyslexia receive the reading programs that are properly designed to meet their unique and individual needs. Establishing the Dyslexia In-Service Training Advisory Council, with representatives from all stakeholders including parents and their advocates, would effectively operate as quality control mechanism to ensure that this legislation and the Dyslexia Task Force's recommendations are properly implemented, as intended.

I urge favorable consideration of R.C.B. 6517 by the Committee.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of this testimony.

Sincerely,



Lawrence Berliner